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THE LOST PARSON

AND OTHER POEMS

THE LOST PARSON

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN A. BRIDGES

AUTHOR OF "WET DAYS," "IN A VILLAGE," ETC.

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

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THE LOST PARSON

THE LOST PARSON.

ONCE on a time—a form we children had
To launch our tales of fairies good and bad—
In humble faith while simple souls yet knelt,
Somewhere of old an English Parson dwelt,
Rich without gold, and great without renown;
I say not if in country or in town.
And I would paint (yet scarcely can tell how)
His picture whom our fathers used to know,
That town and country, left so long without,
May of his lapsed existence cease to doubt,
Nor finding by some gray sequestered spire
All ignorantly of his race inquire.
Let Faith then to my eyes a glimpse restore
Of things unhoped for which we see no more,
And from his changed successors let us guess
What never were his actions, thought, or dress.
E'en cold extinct volcanoes serve to show
What forces once were there, and what a glow.

And first this contrast strikes as not the least:
He did not all begin and end in "Priest,"
But shared the joys and griefs of every roof,
Nor held himself, a sacred thing, aloof.
What Priest to friendship with his flock descends?
But this man was "The Parson," they his friends.

So loved, so trusted, when he spoke or smiled
No father grudged his influence o'er a child.
Men's hearts he loved to move by voice or book,
Nor mean advantage of weak woman took,
Nor with their souls made purse as well his prey,
Keeping their garments when they fled away.
He strutted not like peacock 'mongst his brides,
Of feathers proud, with naught to show besides.
Women, like birds, our Priestly Fathers know,
With plumage tickled are and gaudy show.
Well pleased the Priest his meek adorers spies,
Who notice not the absence of the wise.
His piety was not in chasuble,
Cope, amice, pallium, or thurible.
'Twixt foppery and carelessness he steered,
Nor on his head the saintly foolscap reared.
Those forms of what importance could he deem?
The Gospel proved them foreign to Christ's scheme,
Which for Samaritan no garb laid down,
Or Charity inwove in Levite's gown.
Ne'er did his flock impatient fret to see
Some new design, more smart embroidery,
Which when it palled on the accustomed eye
Was put for some more striking folly by.
He walked not cassock-cased from throat to toe—
One hundred buttons in a length-long row—
Nor bramble-caught made gaitered ploughmen smile
Nor lingered petticoated at a stile.
A broadcloth coat his comely person decked,
Which showed the Parson plain, but not the sect.
From him no woman seeking to confess

Felt absolution like a half caress.
He sent God's throne no intercepted prayer
Which but for middleman were sooner there,
Surprised no secret of the purest mind,
Or modesty to lewdness half inclined.
The prying Priest a painful blush has raised
For thoughts which angels' eyes had seen and praised.
Do tales of crime and murder meet the ear?
No; sinless trifles raise the hidden sneer.
They most repent who need repentance least,
And who confess the most least shock the Priest.

His was no Club whose close and grudging door
Made the strait gate still straiter than before,
Leased Heaven's fair mansions to its own elect,
And blackballed sinners of each other sect,
Engrossed each drop from Christ's ensanguined crown,
And made His awful sacrifice its own.
In genial converse men he loved to meet,
Nor lost life's precious moments in "Retreat."
Let monks withdrawn bend ineffectual knees,
And owls blink sapient from their hollow trees.

He preached as Parsons must, or, as 'tis thought,
With much or not to say, that Parsons ought;
But thrust not out the Church's prayers unread
To act a flowery sermon in their stead;
This was his own poor thing, but those designed
By many minds of men in thought combined,
No hasty product of a harassed hour
But the ripe vigil-fruit of faith and power.
Poor Eloquence, by Statesmen once caressed,
Spurned useless from the Politician's breast,

Sad by the pulpit cushion lurks to list
Dry platitudes, or 'scape the pounding fist.
And impudence can mount the pulpit stair
Without a thought of what will happen there;
As one commenced once, ignorant but bold,
"We are told my friends," and then again "We are told,"
But know not what. Heaven sent no tongue of fire;
Some fools not an Archangel could inspire.
And what avails the chasuble or cope
If still the silly lips refuse to ope?
Men went not to his Church as to a play,
Nor women to be seen in smart array.
'Twas no commercial temple where each took
Degrees and honours from his banker's book;
Where rustling silks, a late and scented show,
Disturbed the prayers of stuff and calico;
Where wholesale men might retail cousins spurn,
Who elbowed out commission in their turn;
Where jealously when these have crammed each stall
The pious poor might line the clammy wall,
And broken farmers hide themselves away,
Far from the seats for which they once could pay,
While death-like damps, and cold uncovered stones
Restore rheumatics to the accustomed bones.
Not much he spoke of dogma; 'twas his thought
That he spoke best who taught what Jesus taught;
Jesus who came to draw men's hearts above
Showed them the Father, and the law of Love.
Therefore he owned no name of any sect,
Nor sat himself among the self-elect.

But if 'twere his 'twixt faith and works to choose
He'd not the substance for the shade refuse.
He deemed not man once saved a saint for life,
Who could not murder though he slew his wife.
Eternal woe he loved not to foretell,
Nor shaped for vulgar souls a vulgar hell.
Hope in his eyes would life's dark path beguile,
And Mercy on his lips ne'er lost her smile.
As self-sown flowers to some choice corner stray,
And seeing that 'tis good decide to stay,
Then from the spot selected no more roam,
The Christian virtues made his heart their home.
There Charity, by fools imagined blind,
Believed or hoped some good of all mankind,
Taught (since each brother's heart's beyond our ken)
That Heaven 's not missed by thinking well of men ;
Saw virtues bloom where not a bud you'd view,
And half ignored the ill she surely knew.
But how dare I his Charity extol,
Himself scarce knew, then how should meaner soul?
Nor are those gifts to Charity allied
The givers rather would resume than hide.
Who advertises alms before the poor
Has his reward, and should expect no more ;
Discounts his Heaven to win the praise of men,
And 'twere too bold to ask of God again.
There, too, one inmate found her happiness
In losing all for others to possess.
The wreaths that less deserving brows adorn
She won, a moment held, to yield unworn.
Pearls before swine some said, e'en so she knew

They might have turned to evil with her too ;
And once her crown on other's head was set
She dimmed not Self-denial with Regret.
Love from the Pagan temple joyful came
To kindle at his hearth a purer flame.
And when th' old selfish tricks were put away,
And he for others learnt to think and pray,
Soon found in passion's loss affection's gain,
And life's sad partings robbed of half their pain,
For Hope shone bright to line each gloomy cloud,
And to a wedding garment turned the shroud.
Courage was there, by some denied the name
Since aiming at no honours and no fame.
Strength, health, love, hate, despair, the wish for power
All steel the human breast in danger's hour,
And pass for Courage ; men applaud the deed
Though prompted oft by callousness or greed,
And vote place, pensions, rank, memorial stone,
Conscious of such deliverers alone.
But when all these have swaggered, fought, and gone,
The Courage of another sort toils on,
Through uneventful hours, and weary days,
At what none else would do, or done would praise.
In fights unwrit, and sometimes fought in vain,
Stands to his arms on no historic plain ;
His arms not such as warriors use, designed
To save instead of massacre mankind ;
And sure of duty keeps to duty's way
While the tired limbs the spirit can obey.
Patience, Hope, Faith, and things the world discards
Make up this Courage, which has no rewards

Or wins contempt, though often 'neath that name
Lurks something like regret, or kin to shame.
And those were ever most contemptible
Whose pigmy breasts contempt serves most to swell.
But for so poor a passion the full mind
Of Courage is too busy or too kind.
There Honesty was found, and scorned to fee
His conscience for unwilling ministry,
And had he doubted doctrine, hope, or prayer,
Would have regretted it, and gone elsewhere ;
Not, when th' advance was sounded, tried to raise
A mutiny, and yet keep pay and place ;
Nor meanly dared—and what could meanness more?—
To take the good man's bread, and burn his store.
Traitors of loaves and fishes love their fill,
And some may know it not yet love them still.
And yet should State from Church, as traitors wish,
Divided leave them without loaf or fish,
The thin disguise soon rent they'd find in Rome
A more congenial when a richer home.
And you who scorn him that Religion clung
To his heart, not tripped incessant from his tongue,
Who would with clothes and posturings engage
Bold to regenerate a faithless age,
Teach whither turn, at what strict angle pray—
I think my Parson's was the better way.
Next—for you ask, what need this trumpet blare
If but acknowledged virtues claimed his care?—
What had been rebel else, by him impressed,
Served in the troop, a virtue like the rest.
Those vices which our virtues so appal

Were not the least of virtues ere their fall.
Vice in her rags is foul and hateful seen—
Your virtue's pedigree may be more mean.
The wish to rise is noble, 'tis the way
We reckless rise that leads mankind astray,
Bids us with Pride, Revenge, and Hatred burn,
And to a hell the peaceful landscape turn.
Ambition, clipped and shorn of all her train,
With him could some nobility retain;
E'en gloomy Pride was Self-respect new-born,
And Hate and Vengeance pruned to righteous scorn.
When lived our Parson? somewhere, one might guess,
Betwixt Religion's rudeness and excess;
When Rome was purged from crimes she dared no more,
Nor we her cast-off clothes like valets wore;
When men were to each other good and true,
If not ne'er dreamed of taking God in too;
Ere crowding foreigners combined to spoil
Freedom, their first attraction to our soil;
When England's wealth was not in stocks or gold,
Nor broadclothed tradesmen homespun honour sold.
'Twas not from Oxford that his virtues came,
Nor sober Cam took credit from his name;
Such hearts as his were never made by rule
Of any Seminary, Sect, or School.
His age is to this oracle unknown—
Regretful that it might not be his own.
The world Noah found for one sweet instant good
Awaits the cleansing of a second flood;

For sin, which o'er the ooze her head scarce dared,
Grown bolder now among the clouds has reared.
So, by reformers swept away in vain,
The exiled vanities appear again.
Oh! hasten, hasten waves of sense we pray,
And sweep their follies or the Priests away;
Or by some greater miracle surprise,
And leave them manly, honest, good, and wise.

MOTHERING SUNDAY.

CAN'T you put to the door, and come in out of the wet?
Fidgetting backwards and forwards; it takes a woman to fret.
Out of the forest and ocean, off of the bloody plain
Looking to see Jack, Tommy, and Ned scampering down the lane.

I remembers 'em same as you do what though I'm not piping my eye.
I had never no time for no feelings, nor yet to sit down and cry.
And sometimes I wish I'd forgotten the days when they tripped in and out;
But they're gone, and there's no use a waiting. You'll have to get dinner without.

There was Jack with his sailing of boats, and for ever a wetting his feet,
And Tom with his drum and tin trumpet, a marching about in the street.
And Ned with his old-fashioned ways—thought farming was all the go;
For ever a straddling Buxom, or driving his mates G. O.

So Jack went to sea as we 'spected, and then got
blown off a spar;
While Tom ran away and enlisted, and died in that
Frontier war.
Then for all as Ned was so steady it seemed as he
couldn't rest
Till the fever and ague they settled him, pioneer out
in the West.

What are you crying for, dame, and looking so scorn-
ful at me
Who had never the heart for no fighting, and never
would sail over sea,
Who had never no courage nor go?—and the parson
he called it content
As I moiled for twelve shillings a week—and I wish,
goodness knows, I'd a went.

That Rhodes he's a wonderful chap, no doubt, with
his empires and fads;
But what use would there be for Rhodeses and such
withouten our lads?
And when our lads they was wanted we gave 'em
without any fuss,
So as Abraham offering of Isaac worn't never a patch
upon us.

There, "thank the Lord for His mercies." Here all
alone as we sit
We might happen had less of His mercies. Why,
dame, you've not eaten a bit.

Pulling a peevish face; can't see His mercies, you say!
Let Solomon talk till he 's silly a woman must go her
own way.

Yet we'll meet 'em again one day if so be that like us
they was good,
Who never got nigher no sinning than only to wish
that we could.
There'll be kissing and fooling up yonder, and who'll
do the talking I know,
So hand down the 'bacca, old woman, I'll smoke a
quiet pipe here below.

A LETTER FROM THE COUNTRY

"In many of our villages there is scarcely a young agricultural labourer to be found."—*County Paper.*

As I yesterday looked from the crest
Whence our hill to the valley slopes down
I saw, like a cloud rising out of the West,
The smoke of the far distant town.
'Twas there that you've lived since the day
That you left us. They say "out of sight,
Out of mind"; yet I can't put old feelings away,
And your Jenny determines to write.

You may fancy it's dull with us now
In the daytime, when no one's about
Till father crawls home wearied out from the plough-
Poor father, he's getting worn out.
How once for your coming I'd wait,
When you thought more of love than of gold.
Now there's never a soul to lean over the gate,
Or to walk up the path as of old.

The apples and cherries are set,
The thrushes are bursting their throats;
And to think in the noise of the town you'll forget
The thrill of their ravishing notes!

As you tramp through the dust of the street,
Do you never recall with a sigh
How the lark used to spring from the grass at your feet,
To soar out of sight in the sky?

Do you never look up at the hill,
And the Church that o'ershadows the grave
Where your old mother lies? How we honour her still!
Do you think her "a useful old slave?"
And I, whom she oft called her child,
Have her Bible to lead where she 's gone
From the cot where the rose o'er her window runs wild,
And the jasmine in sorrow lies prone.

Though nothing has come from our walks
In the days when you wished we were wed,
Yet I wonder sometimes if you think of those talks,
And all that you promised and said.
Dear lad, if you'd rather forget
That I fancied you faithful and true
'Tis forgotten; but if you'd remember it yet
Why then Jenny remembers it too.

With simplicity, honesty, health
You might surely have managed to live.
You'd have stayed—would you not?—had we offered you wealth,
But we hadn't a fortune to give.

So if riches are half that some say,
If for love and all else they'll atone,
Go and conquer the world, my dear lad, your own way,
And leave Jenny to fight it alone.

THE WELSH FARM.

GLEAMING no more as in Spring,
But desolate, dull, and forlorn,
Lies, 'mid the gorse and the ling,
The clearing whereon I was born.
White mists from the valley uprise,
And the heavens above are o'ercast,
Will it please Him who orders the skies
To arrange for my harvest at last?

Summer and Autumn are over;
I stand at my door in the rain,
And list the shrill cry of the plover,
Who mocks at my labour in vain.
Yet I trust that the Lord of all
May still of His mercy incline,
When He 's noted each sparrow's fall,
To prevent or to mitigate mine.

I dreamt not of wealth or of pleasure,
For me these can ne'er have been meant;
I asked but of Thee a half measure,
With less I had well been content.

Make not the duty too hard
  Of Thy servant who bows to Thy will,
Since the valley has had its reward
  Take pity, at last, on the hill.

Thou who hast placed me here,
  Nearest to Thee and Thy sky,
Since deaf to my prayers Thine ear,
  Forgive if I ask Thee "why?"
To see Thy sun set late,
  And first to greet him again,
In the midst of Thy temple to wait,
  And wait for Thy mercy in vain?

Pour out Thine anger, Lord,
  On the heathen who scorn Thee below,
Who care not for Thee or Thy word—
  With their score of bright ricks in a row;
Not on us who remembered Thee ever
  Till trouble had made us forget;
And Thou who know'st th' endeavour
  Thou should'st remember us yet.

Yet here at Thy orders I stay,
  Patiently counting the cost,
Since Thou may'st reward me one day
  For the life and the harvests I lost,
With a refuge where storms shall cease,
  And skies be no more overcast,
With a snug little haven of peace,
  And an Indian summer at last.

THE OLD LABOURER TO HIS SMOCK.

YOU'RE clean wore out, my poor old smock,
That fought so long the wind and rain,
The quality you'll no more shock,
Or make smart townsfolk jeer again.
Storms couldn't soak, nor hedges tear;
Seemed as you might a beat decay,
Such homely, strong, and lasting wear!
Who for their coats as much 'ud say?

We know'd the old "green," all gorse and sand,
Not roseydandrummed all around,
With gimcrack temple for the band,
Where'd used to be the parish Pound.
The "Bell," all glazed and tinkered up,
Ain't half as snug as 'twas afore;
Inside the old place we'd many a sup;
There'll ne'er a smock sit there no more.

Afore the old Church took note o' clothes,
Or smocked 'uns wasn't let to pray,
Come Molly blushing like a rose,
And you was new that very day.

We knows her place, my pretty bride,
'Neath the green mound with ne'er a name,
And I were thankful when her died,
As I were happy when her came.

"They're never poor who have content"
Was what we'd used to think and say;
My smock and I 'tis time we went,
They'd call us silly vools to-day.
Content 's just counted for a crime,
As bad as murthering well nigh;
We'd little else; 'tis surely time
That we was gone, my smock and I.

Farmers as wore our homely dress
Come evil times not far they fell:
The smock they'd stuck to in success
Fitted the labourer as well.
Their coming down they didn't show
Writ on their backs for all to see;
And kings worse company might know
Than putting up with poverty.

With wrinkles now for every pleat
Down hill we'll trudge without a sigh,
If, too, without the merry feet
That sped us up in years gone by.
Tho' here we made no sort o' fuss
Happen we'll find when hence we go
Some station better, or no wuss
Than this we toiled in here below.

THE CLERK. (OLD STYLE.)

OUR quaint old clerk
Is a man of mark
Not only in church on Sunday,
But, too, in his yard,
Working early and hard
As a carpenter on Monday.

He 's a beard like a goat,
And the squire's old coat
Clings tight till you think it must crack;
And his neck thrice round
A red comforter 's wound,
And tied in a knot at the back.

All forms, but that
Whereupon he 's sat
So long, perplex him sadly.
He looks peevish when
He 's missed an Amen,
And he misses his short pipe badly.

He 's irreverent
At the Sacrament,
When the novice draws near with dread.

"Through these lips of mine
Have passed quarts of their wine,
And loaves of their holy bread."

He damps the proud air
Of a bridal pair
With his wanton pose of mourner;
Ere a christening 's done
Lo! the hassocks are gone,
And he 's kicking them back to their corner.

He 's cynical
At a funeral.
"Would those for their friend who're crying
Prefer to be dead
And buried, instead
Of him for whom they're sighing?"

His creed, perhaps,
Is, between the naps,
"Let 'the Reverend' think it out.
What boots it sigh
For a 'how' or 'why'
When we've worries enough without?"

'Twould be wiser, old man,
To follow your plan,
And contented sit by the curtain,
E'en fall asleep,
Than beyond it peep,
Since a glimpse might leave us uncertain.

When you're put out of sight,
One may o'er you write
—Not I—" There will scarce be ten so
Faithful and true
Now we've buried you,
And the Bishops can't bury Colenso."

AT THE TOP OF THE STEPS.

PARSON may talk as a will, but I can't understand it aright;
Two score years together, and going to leave me to-night.
Swopping the leaky thatch for a slated mansion on 'igh.
But you'll stand at the top of the steps, and not let the old fellow go by.

You'll twig me a coming along; you allus was wonderful sharp;
But I'd happen be passing you by, tricked out with your crown and your 'arp
—Never played none as I knows on; you can't never tell till you try—
So stand at the top of the steps, and don't let the old fellow go by.

There was chaps a sight worser nor me, and it won't be a mossel like you
To remember the things as I did, and forget what I didn't do.

And as often you'd fetch me home at night from the
"Cock and Pye,"
Wait for me, lass, once more, and don't let the old
fellow go by.

"Robert!" they'll ask, "who's Robert, and what
might he want this a way?
Ain't much to look at, ain't Robert." Then someone
in orfice'll say,
"Can't you see as it's Jenny as wants him? Jenny
we couldn't deny."
So you'll stand at the top of the steps, and not let the
old fellow go by.

Since together life wasn't too gay, with scarce any
pleasure—to call—
'Twill be worse when I trudge it alone (with the pig
to be fettled and all),
And when soon, like my smock, tis' wore out, a new
one I'll cheerfully try,
With you at the top of the steps, to not let the old
fellow go by.

AN OLD NURSE.

"Tu quoque littoribus nostris. . . ."
Virgil.

"YOU left these shores their lasting name;
They give you back eternal fame;"
So ran the poet's story.
"Your unforgotten tomb still tells
The place where yet your honour dwells;
If that for you be glory."

Not noblest deeds for fame suffice,
Till poets' words immortalize
And deal the chance award.
Our Kate had shared Caieta's fame
Had her's been linked with Virgil's name
And not an unknown bard.

What though she nursed no heroes, she
Something heroic saw, maybe,
In what the rest found common.
And we though common were not blind,
But in our little hearts enshrined
A dear, good, tender woman.

With simplest ways and quaintest thought
More for her teasing pets she wrought
Than mothers often do.
For love how loyally she gave,
What now for meed scarce any have,
Her old-time service true.

She kept the old faith so few now hold;
Stars were to light her, she'd been told,
Nor further guessed their glories.
If angels here she might not meet
She had yet with God communion sweet
As men in Bible stories.

O ne'er let Walmer's name grow cold
Which gave the turf her limbs to enfold,
May common Deal live sweet
As cedar box wherein we lay
Relics of friends long passed away,
And little Mongeham great.

Caieta, Kate, 'tis much the same;
What 's in a place or in a name?
Heroes or humble yeomen,
Aeneas, I, we could but be
The better for remembering thee,
Thou best of all good women.

CONTENT.

FAR away from city or town,
In a crazy cottage and tumble down,
Content lived blessed with his frugal store
On the farm that his father tilled before.
He walked in the paths his sires had trod,
With his father's prayer to his father's God.
Few were his wants, these unskilled toil
Scarce wrenched from the offended soil.
All that he had he thought was good,
He had all he wished of wealth or food.
And far away from city or town,
His wife, grown gray in her homespun gown,
Watched humdrum days, contented, go,
Nor sighed for a world she did not know.
  Near this happiness Discontent
Wandered one day and pitched his tent,
All seemed naught that he possessed,
All that he lacked he thought was best.
So he laboured till each grateful field
Repaid him with a tenfold yield;
But failing markets for his grain
The tenfold yield was reaped in vain.
Rough was the road, his teams were slow,
It took too long to come and go.

A railroad to the coast one day
Shortened the toilsome winding way.
Ships came over the sea for him,
Catering each to some new whim.
Whims into wants were quickly made—
Wants developing into trade,
Well-fed labour sang his praise,
And scorned Content's too easy ways.
One day Content on his barren hill
Pricked slow ears to the whistle shrill,
Dropped dull eyes to the fertile down,
And the flocks that might well have been his own
Saw the ships steam in from the sea,
And knew the old wealth for poverty.
Then Content was blessed no more;
With one sad glance from the open door
He turned to his straw-stuffed pallet, sighed,
Set his face to the wall and died.
They made his grave—the few who yet
Heed little of life's toil and fret—
Not in the cemetery fine
Where new tombs strive the last to outshine,
And statuarists vainly vie
Thrusting abortions at the sky,
But by the waste all unimproved,
The wilderness that once he loved
Before he opened his dull eyes
On Discontent and Enterprise;
Where from its stem, which none invade,
The thistledown floats through the glade,
And the rabbit's palace is in the sand,

And the plover lords it o'er no man's land ;
Where broom is golden without toil,
And the heather rich in the scanty soil,
There with a tear they laid him down—
A virtue by the world outgrown.

TO NEW ZEALAND.

OFF to New Zealand yesterday;
  This was his only chance, they told him;
He was a farmer, tradesmen they
  Accustomed to advise and scold him.
These glibly speed upon its way
  The lessening bark we sadly scan.
Wits miss their butt, and rogues their prey.
  For us we lose our honest man.

Though forced in self-defence to know
  The rudiments of many trades
He lacked the polished swagger so
  Distinguishing commercial blades.
He could not pose in the *Gazette*
  'Mid giant sums that so astound,
Or cleverly a fortune net,
  To fail for twopence in the pound.

A Tory still, he could but tire
  Of those who "in" forgot his need,
And "out" his welfare must desire,
  But inability could plead.
While demagogues—which vexed his soul—
  As truer friends preferred loud claims,
And made him by each cunning dole
  Their stalking horse to selfish aims.

He toiled; made honey; as it grew
The drones, rapacious, filched his store
(Before the taste himself he knew)
Nor left him heart to gather more.
Coins from his lavish County saved
Next to Imperial aims he owed,
On the grim veldt his banner waved,
Red with his gold Tugela flowed.

His Church he loved, but yet rebelled,
His simple faith ignored, passed by
By selfish sycophants who yelled
Their shibboleths of "low" or "high."
His roads the lordly brewer ground,
The wasteful School Board learnt to cling
To his o'erloaded shoulders round,
And made spoiled ploughboys sum and sing.

This couldn't last, collectors call
Too often at his surly door;
The world grew rich, who bore it all,
Atlas, grew thinner and more poor.
Friends whom his votes had helped to scale
Life's ladder, pledges half outgrown,
Took office, turned deaf ear, turned tail,
Turned Lords, and kicked the ladder down.

So wisely, while he could, he went,
The last of all we thought to spare,
While some surviving coins unspent
In much-worn pocket lingered rare.

Ere the poor "guardian of the poor,"
Victim of fate's excessive whim,
Stood suppliant at the workhouse door,
That sadly oped to welcome him.

Cousins, our foes for yours who take,
In arms, in death your kinship proved,
Befriend, and for your mother's sake
Cherish the Englishman we loved.
And surely he shall find with you
A new and more auspicious home,
And hearts beyond the sea as true
As those from which fate forced him roam.

A TELEGRAPH POLE.

LONG since in your evergreen home o'er the sea,
Where the pine and the tamarack grew,
Your boughs in the spring waved graceful and free,
And graceful in winter too.
Around you would hover the humming-bird bright,
And the teal to the green pools roam,
And the fire-flies at night, like a cloud of light,
Illumine your forest home.

Now heedless of change, in a land far away,
Your beauty long perished and dead,
You stand by the side of my parish highway,
And are listlessly useful instead;
While the rustics all wonder what tidings of note
The wind to your wires hums low,
While swallows make summer as round them they float,
Or sit there preparing to go.

And to-day in your knots I imagine I trace
A likeness to one I have known,
Who tells with a wooden expressionless face
A tale his belief has outgrown;

By the aid of whose cold and automaton lips
  Live words to their destiny fly,
And who coolly imparts to warm throbbing hearts
  The message that comes from the sky.

THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS.

ACROSS the seas when through the night
Returning swallows wing their flight,
Then hasten, busy, to renew
The nests whence fledglings first they flew,
I from my office by the Strand
Would emulate the eager band,
And, too, reseek, by fancy's play,
The nest from which I fled away.

Dear sacred cot to love and song
My thoughts, like swallows, round you throng.
Roses still climb your porch, and still
Strains the white orchard up the hill;
The sparkling brooklet murmurs near,
With no reproaches for my ear,
And walking 'neath the chequered shade
I see my unforgotten maid;

Alas! the once fond eyes are cold,
She shuns the arms that would enfold;
Without a smile, without a tear
I watch her pass and disappear.

Bright were the vision had she stayed,
Without her radiance let it fade.
The jewel lost that cast the spell,
Let the dulled setting go as well.

Thrice happy swallows, who return
To the old homes you once could spurn;
Who gaily skim the murmuring brook
You so contentedly forsook;
The torn, deserted nests renew,
Nor miss delights last year you knew.
Since men lost joys can ne'er regain
We emulate your flight in vain.

THE PLOUGHBOY'S WHISTLE.

THERE 'S snow on the hill, the lark lies chill,
Pinched robin sulks in his holly tree;
The east wind's cry has an echo shrill
In the ploughboy's whistle along the lea.
It tells of a wealth the rich ne'er win,
And a wisdom the wise forego—
To remember the lilies that toil not nor spin,
And consider them how they grow.

Sweet as a Heaven-sent dream of calm
To the king of a war-distracted clime,
Or to weary souls as the peaceful psalm
On Christmas morn of the distant chime,
Are the artless notes from his lips that flow
And the old refrain they borrow—
"Consider the lilies how they grow,
Take thought for the rest to-morrow."

The wind thro' the rents in his rags steals in,
The snow in good fellowship enters free;
Far better than fur-lined coat to win
The freedom shared by those comrades three:

The wind that can blow where it lists, the snow
That recks not of care or sorrow,
And his whistle gay, with its "laugh to-day;
Time to be sad to-morrow."

THE OLD SPANIEL.

TH' old dog her glossy head would rear,
Her eye resume its youthful glow,
Well pleased she'd cock a silken ear,
And move her docked tail to and fro.
Her old limbs stretched she'd saunter calm,
(All youthful gambols long since o'er,)
To thrust her cold nose in my palm,
And greet me at my study door.

"Leave strife behind who enter here."
The jarring "Council's" worries die,
The Parish Vestry's frowns severe
Like mists before the sunshine fly.
Election bills of red or blue,
The changeful rabble's baseless roar,
Ambition, pride, which elsewhere woo,
Come not within my study door.

Few enter; for since once caressed
The veriest fool might wish to stay,
'Tis best not take one to a breast
Too soft to turn a fool away.

But hither those I love may come;
When once they pass my study door
Upon these shelves they make their home,
And never leave me any more.

Old friends in thought, who ne'er clasped hand
Dire foes in many a battle stout,
Near neighboured here yet speechless stand,
Sit close as wax, and fall not out.
While many an ancient half forgot,
With moderns whom we would forget,
Bound up by chance with glory's lot,
Are stupid and immortal yet.

Here Shakespeare reigns supreme, his right
Elsewhere though faddists dare gainsay,
And Byron honoured in despite
Of poetaster's jealous bray.
Horace, Burns, Béranger are one
In friendship as in art, the while
Virgil to Milton passes on
Old Homer's bland, superior smile.

And here and there some humbler bard,
Squeezed in th' acknowledged great between,
Not all approves the kind award,
And blushes, but not quite unseen.
Thus, by selecting prigs ignored,
(Signposts to evanescent fame)
Barnes, quaintly pious, lives adored,
Yet recks not of his honoured name.

Dear loving souls, since to be loved
A loving soul may predicate,
Your greatness some has so much moved
As almost made your lovers great,
Made happy quite. Be still unkind,
Friends, fortune, hopes to which we cling;
Friends, fortune, hope in you we find,
And in your leaves eternal spring.

'Tis friendship's hour; the ruddy light
On the close rows inviting shines.
My lamp is lit, yet sad to-night
My heart the proffered joy declines.
Old friend, a lie who never told,
Who bore no grudge for peevish ways,
Who to my praise was never cold,
Nor flattered me with silly praise,

With you, dear dog, this strain began;
'Twas memory spoke; I sit alone.
'Tis best that it should be so, Fan,
My loved companion, dead and gone.
O'er her will wave surviving grass,
The primrose die, and bloom, and die;
'Twas hard so soon from life to pass
Without a promise in the sky.

What! ended here!—so experts tell—
Your helpful work, your cheering play;
While heirs of Heaven their birthright sell,
Or cast th' unvalued boon away.

On old beliefs since Priests improve,
Since men by Faith set little store,
Would Heaven, which needed not your love,
Had left you by my study door.

SAGES MUCH DISPUTE.

SAGES much dispute
  How and when this world was made;
Whether man and brute
  For some million years have strayed
Or but thousands toiled below.
No sages we, but this we know;
When first you heard the poor man's prayer,
Though an enemy knelt there,
Love, hope, charity first knew,
Then the world began to you.

Sages much dispute
  Whether cold or heat shall rend,
Or the sudden shoot
  Of some new star our old shall end.
No sages we, but this we know;
When friends cool who once would glow,
And warm charity's turned cold,
Love and hope grown gray and old,
Heat for others may undo,
Frost has wrecked the world for you.

THE KNOT.

I LOVE the bird which as it flies
To polar snows from southern skies
Steals from each clime one perfect day,
And revels in perpetual May.

Who taught my love the lesson rare
"No clime, no heart can all be bare";
Who bid her glean from every soul
'Twixt the equator and the pole?

E'en from the failings of each race
To snatch an unsuspected grace,
Or win from pride debased and low
A pure and patriotic glow?

Her passion from the south she stole,
From the cold north her steadfast soul,
Her wisdom mined from depths unknown,
Her charity was all her own.

Did any weep? she, too, was sad;
Joy came your way, and she was glad;
As every thought and every word
Had in her breast an answering chord.

Her sympathies were never meant
To centre in one continent,
By mountain chains enchained to be,
Or circumscribed by any sea.

'Twas little that, to suit her mind,
By heaven her form was, too, designed,
That passed no slighted feature by
Its neighbour to intensify.

In body or mind 'twas not her way
To strike by pre-arranged display,
Or take by storm the startled sense
With this or that of eminence.

Some might surpass her here or there
In form or face or flowing hair,
But where they failed she still was good,
Who nowhere failed in any mood.

Scarce bloomed a flower but you could trace
Its best endowment in her face;
The haughty rose, more willing slave
Than e'er to bee, her sweetness gave.

The trusting lily's festal wear
Warned from anxiety and care;
The blushing violet peeped to say
"Be pure," then hid herself away.

But while she absorbed the essence so
Of all sweet things that breathe and blow,
Alas! from flowers she differed still
That none could pluck her 'gainst her will.

One day she left us, like the flowers;
What tears, what bitter tears were ours!
How joyful she! yet, all the while,
Lest she should wound us, would not smile.

Left sordid souls to toil and spin,
Content the better part to win;
And, as below once, so above,
She has the best of joy and love.

The voice that thrilled us still she'll raise
Intensified with purer praise.
Her harp takes on a sweeter tone,
Nearer and dearer to the throne.

KINDLY SNOW.

ONE wandering flake, then another or two,
Uhlan-like spies floating down from the blue.
Skirmishers next drifting in on the blast,
Till closer and closer dense legions crowd fast.
Hail to you warriors riding from far,
Scenting the day of battle and war.

Hasten, white legions, to work out your will,
Camp in each valley and drift from each hill.
Storm then and capture the walled holy ground,
Crush more the yew tree, and level each mound,
And hers whom I loved and who loved me so
Hide, of your Charity, kindly snow.

And, winners, cling fast to your victories won,
Chill out the spring breezes and hinder the sun.
There are lands which you hold throughout the year,
Where never flower can a bud uprear,
Where ice-bound fountains are ever in thrall,
And snow eternal is over all.

Yet spring will come back to her haunts again,
And sap with soft zephyrs your adamant reign.

Armies before you have yielded, I know,
To the fair soft arms of the conquered foe,
Echoing Capua's enervate spell,
Falling as surely as Samson fell.

O Spring! of your mercy be cruel I pray;
Bid your lovers defer for a little their May;
For when birds in each coppice are nesting again,
And violets peeping in every lane,
I shall hear their note, I shall see them blow,—
And the grave that was hid by the kindly snow.

THE SEARCH FOR EDEN.

How vain their toil who would retrace
The long-lost confines of the place
Where once our parent, Adam, trod
Primaeval turf and walked with God,
Watched the first flowers in Eden blow,
And heard the mystic rivers' flow.

Dear, sacred site, be still unknown ;
I would not see you overgrown ;
A tangled waste 'twere sad to scan
The spot where God once walked with man,
And choked with noxious weeds or dry
The mystic streams that murmured nigh.

Enough to know that each one still
Can make his garden where he will,
Can turn the flaming sword aside
To walk with God at eventide,
See flowers in his new Eden blow,
And list the mystic rivers' flow.

LIGHTLY.

COVER him lightly, and spare if you may
To crush that frail breast with your ponderous clay.
Make him a grave near the warm sun and air,
Near to our mirth which no longer he'll share.
Be his last foolish wish not all uttered in vain,
And he'll never be guilty of folly again.

Speak of him tenderly, weigh him not down
With your just judge's censure, your righteous man's frown.
Blame him; he still was a man when all 's o'er;
Praise, which he loved not, could make you no more.
Yet the blame he'd not feel might be hurtful to you,
And yourself gain the flowers you in charity strew.

Dear friend, since you'd ever a tear for our woe,
Till our last tears are shed still for you they shall flow;
Since our sins you forgave, and our failings forgot,
We will think you had none, or remember them not.
Shall the measure you heaped be not meted again,
Or the mercy which none e'er entreated in vain?

And since virtues were yours which too oft are denied
To the consciously good who your errors decried,

Shall not hope blossom sweet as the garlands we lay
On the grave of the sinner we bury to-day?
While the fortunate crowd who've no sins of their own,
Late shamed, stand aloof with their Pharisee's stone.

ILLUSIONS.

WHEN I was young, and smooth this brow
Which now deep wrinkles sad invade,
I was the heir of all below,
And stars above for me were made.
Proudly this conscious bosom beat
At high descent and destiny.
Illusions fair no more we meet.
How could you leave me so and die?

Alas! the star I deemed the best
And brightest was the first to go,
And minor stars' eclipse confessed
That from its rays was drawn their glow.
I first felt darkness when I knew
That men could bend, and preach, and pray,
False hands uplift with heart untrue:
'Twas so Faith's glory passed away.

Pride faded next, when silly sage
To fish and ape and creeping worm
Traced the degraded lineage
Which once stood forth in God's own form.

In naught begun, to end in naught,
What good for man to rise too far?
That Hope was folly next they taught;
And so I lost another star.

And thus extinguished one by one
The lights of childhood left the sky;
And when they set there rose no sun,
For night, not morning, saw them die;
Die, not as theirs from waning moon,
From fading stars who turn away,
Secure to greet the morning soon,
And bask in brighter beam of day.

O happy hind! whose toilsome lot
Mows the green vale, or reaps the hill,
Since that their loss can profit not,
Some Faith, Pride, Hope go with you still.
Still twinkling stars their lights display,
Ten thousand joys which once were mine
(So rayless to my homeward way),
And shine for you. Oh! let them shine.

"OF WHICH EASTER TO BE ONE."

Rubric.

It stood in the shade, in the old churchyard,
In a corner where no one came;
The moss encroaching had made it hard
To read the forgotten name;
But still their legend the letters told,
"Life is busy and love grows cold."

But once a year (when the sun had set,
To rise upon Easter day),
Some friend who never could quite forget
Brought greetings from far away,
And wreaths of choicest earliest flowers:
Strange contrast to the neglectful hours.

So, too, at Easter my wreath I bring,
Oh! grant it be not in vain;
Dear Friend, to whose love I used to cling,
Whom I ne'er will forget again.
But what if a debt so long delayed
Had wounded less were it left unpaid?

And what if my tribute for once out-do
Their shrine that is daily decked?

Will the gifts that in keen remorse I strew
  Atone for a year's neglect?
To forget through the long slow-passing hours,
Then wildly at Easter cast my flowers!

SWEET-BRIAR.

NOT by my wit was she impressed,
Or qualities that charmed the rest;
'Twas but her Charity that chose
To think me what I'm not, God knows.

Her wish first gave what I should have,
Then valued for the gifts it gave;
With gems the casket first endowed,
Then prized the fanciful abode.

Weakness the strength was made me dear,
The gleam of an infrequent tear,
The trembling lip my frown denied,
Or pity's glance I strove to hide.

And loving her ere long I loved
The simple things that she approved;
Display and show learnt to despise,
And scanned all virtues through her eyes.

To town-bred folks as gardeners show
What plants should in their garden grow,
She thrust the peonies aside
And let the modest lily bide.

Sweet-briar I named her—'tis its way,
'Twas hers, with unpretentious sway
To freshen morn, like silent prayer,
Or more enbalm eve's scented air.

Rise up, sweet-briar, the rest efface,
And from your corner scent the place.
Smother each growth that you would blame,
Each florid weed you'd count for shame.

And since 'twas nothing grand or wise
First found me favour in your eyes,
Order my garden, till 'tis shewn
Pure, modest, sweet, and like your own.

A CHRISTMAS TREE.

WHEN I was in my native vale,
Unmarked as yet by spoiler's eye,
Spring breezes blessed, the summer gale
Kissed softly as it passed me by.
I grew there with my sisters three,
With me the robin made his nest,
I was a blithe young forest tree,
The straightest and the best.

They decked me for a Christmas tree
With fruits and blossoms strange and gay;
Soft music swelled, there woke in me
Brief scorn of robin's homelier lay,
The artless tunes he carolled so
To praise my changing diadem
Of summer dew, or winter snow—
On every spine a gem.

Alas for a poor Christmas tree!
Thrown out upon the pavement cold
Of this dull court, strewn dismally
With broken toys, and relics old.

Defiled, forgotten, sunk so low
That summer sun, or autumn's rain,
Or winter's gale, or spring's soft blow
Shall vex nor cheer again.

Sweet sisters, spreading where I grew
Without a care except for me,
If half my misery you knew
You'd fain forgive your sister tree.
How from your fond and loving smile
Had they the heart to make me stray,
To pet me so a little while,
Then cast me thus away?

Sweet sisters—three who once were four—
Calmly your seasons come and go;
Not so mine sped, but mine are o'er,
And life was something now I know.
Let robin make his nest with you
—How happy once he was with me!—
And be forgiving kind and true
To my sad memory.

AN ALPINE TRIUMPH.

WHEN first we thought this peak to scale
'Twas robed in morning's misty veil;
And not till evening's shadows fall
Around it with their dusky pall
It lays its maiden scruples by,
And stoops to kiss us from the sky.

Such pride in the attempt we had
Strange that the winning leaves us sad;
But now, as thoughtless conquerors do
Full oft, our victory we rue,
And would intact the fort restore—
Were't not impossible—once more.

Alas! for the untrodden snow!
"Invicta" must her name forego.
Had we forborne th' inviolate hill
She had answered to "Invicta" still,
And what of us who hoped for fame
From her dishonour and our shame?

Then steal away, nor ever tell
What of our insolence befell.

Pray only that before the sun
His daily course begins to run
New-fallen snows from pitying skies
May shield the trespass from his eyes.

FORTY YEARS AFTER.

HAVE they found you at last, dear friend of mine,
After our parting of forty years,
When the eyes you loved so have ceased to shine,
And the eyes that wept you have no more tears?
Down o'er the iceclad rocks you flew,
Passed from my startled sight away;
That you surely were dead was all we knew;
And there you have lain till yesterday.

And often, often I've wished, I too,
On the far-off morning that saw us part,
Into the chasm had taken with you
My life, and my hopes, and my trusting heart.
Since time o'er our youth creeps chill and slow,
And bright hopes fade into sere and dry,
And hearts than yours have a colder snow,
With feelings withered before they die.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE BUSH.

ONCE more 'tis Christmas day, and another year's nigh past,
And slowly sinks its setting sun, by storms and clouds o'ercast.
It lights the little shanty with a ray forlorn and cold;
'Twould need a brighter beam to-day to gild the hopes of old.

Ah! for our thoughts go, yours and mine, to other days than these,
Other dreams and fancies, and a prayer at mother's knees.
Sad visions dim our eyes, in our ears sad music knells;
Eyes no glimpse of home can light, ears deaf to Christmas bells.

No far-sent greeting comes to us from cliff, or down, or moor,
Or well-known house where strangers bar th' inhospitable door.

Not a chair in chimney corner as of old inviting stands,
Or a dog to thrust his nose in the long-forgotten hands.

In the rude and noisy tavern a league and more away
Our mates are spending Christmas in their rude and noisy way.
That they should spend it so is best, for 'tis their nature to;
But we'll together to the bush, and lay a big tree low.

No puny half-grown sapling which might common days suffice,
But the kingly oak which hence is seen in yon cleared space to rise.
Though long its gnarled and knotted trunk has scared the axe away
Its reign is o'er, no lesser crash shall shake the woods to-day.

Quick, comrade; rest is good, but peace and toil are kin.
Fast, faster fly the chips; to the heart we soon shall win.
And when stilled the hearts, or changed, that would beat for us alone,
Like this poor solitary tree 'tis time our days were done.

Mark! for now it totters. "Stand from under," not again
Could a thousand men replace it though they toiled with might and main.
Raise up the stately trunk, with its branches spreading wide;
But not the fallen hopes that perished in their pride.

With a sad regretful sighing for a little day or two
Winds through the void uneasily will blow,
And squirrels for a week lament their palace' wreck to see;
Then winds and they will sport and play about the fallen tree.

Now sitting on this prostrate foe late pointing to the sky
Once more let memory hold her sway, then, too, let memory die.
One backward glance on joys we'll cast, on griefs a moment dwell;
When from this oak we turn away we've conquered them as well.

Forgotten all our craving sore for love and good men's praise,
And set dulled hearts to cultivate our meagre crops of maize;
That when these stumps are rooted out which seem so lasting now
Some stranger o'er our bones may drive—well, let him drive—his plough.

Old house, whose modest brick blushed out 'twixt rick
and barn and tree,
Once all your thousand lattice panes you'd wink to
welcome me.
Elm-fringed around you as of old the gleaming
meadows lie,
And stubbles now which others plough—God bless
you and good-bye.

THE BALLOON.

WE were two souls in friendship bound,
Together we wandered the wide earth round.

As earth grew narrow we thought we'd try
To cruise in the fields of the brighter sky.

And if we should ever return we'd tell
How others might travel the sky as well.

But prudence feared we might soar too far—
Something I lacked, so left the car,

And left my friend to his unsafe ways,
While I clung to the earth and my calmer days.

Adieu was waved, and heavenward fast
Out of my sight and ken he passed.

What he saw no soul can tell,
What I see all see as well.

Where he went there's none can say;
Daily I tread my weary way.

Where is his grave there's none to show;
Full well the place of my own I know.

Yet I sometimes wish I had tried—in vain—
Some priceless boon for mankind to gain.

Or that Heaven above I had rash defied,
Brought down new fire to the earth and died.

Ah! but to reach an heroic goal
Is given not to a sordid soul.

Still can I pray that I may not be
Too thankful for sloth and security.

A SEA RELIC.

HIGH and dry on its shelf, all unmoved by the fretting
Of waves which still ripple against the old coast,
The tide's welcome rush to its sea pools forgetting,
And strangely inactive for once tempest tossed.

Yet it flashed to a breast long unused to emotion
The spray-beaten cottage, the cliffs, and the wrack,
The sea-bird's shrill cry to the pitiless ocean,
And the boat which went out but which never came back.

Not more withered and lost is this strayed relic lying
Afar from the waves which shall sway it no more
Than a poor inland heart that lives on without sighing
O'er past joys and griefs—high and dry on life's shore.

AN AUTUMN ROSE.

THE beech glowed redder for the cold,
Pale birch trees shivered off their gold,
Pink cherries mocked their autumn blush,
Low brambles shone with varied flush.

Grieving for perished unplucked flowers
I rustled through th' untidy bowers,
And in a garden stripped of posies
I spied the last of all my roses.

Made by sweet circumstance more fine
'Twas so this last rose seemed to outshine
The countless buds which summer fathered
To bloom unsmelt, unkissed, ungathered.

When roses blushed on every stem
Few turned aside to gather them;
Who spurns this last may search in vain
He'll never find a rose again.

"Fear not," I said, "lone, tender blossom,
Live, while we both live, on my bosom.
Sweeter than summer's scattered posies;
Best—that the last of all my roses."

THE SAILOR.

FAR down through depths that never were stirred,
Where the tempest's voice was never heard,
A ripple reached my unused home,
And I knew that the Judgment day was come.

And I rose from my oozy bed, and pillow
Of seaweed, straight through the maddened billow,
And felt in my spirit hopes and fears
That had slept with my sleep of a thousand years.

Now fast through mists and clouds I fleet,
And many a soul new-risen greet;
Each comes, like me, from an ocean bed,
As yet the close Earth keeps her dead.

All ye I greet, brave hearts who ever
From home, friends, comforts dared to sever,
Steered crazy barks through the storms and the thunders,
To find new lands and see new wonders.

Eyes gray with gazing into the night,
And looks with ceaseless watching white.
Fond hearts to some village steeple true;
But they rested not beneath its yew.

The grass grows green o'er my sister's head,
The earth lies deep on my brother's bed,
My father's breast has a heavy stone;
Yet they may all be here anon.

We thank Thee, Lord, who know'st our story,
And our love for all Thine earthly glory,
That Thou hast burst the old wearying fetter,
Now we shall see and love Thee better.

How ignorant! Yet we knew Thee best,
And Thy fair world from east to west;
And first we come an eager band
To crowd on sail for another land.

ATROPOS.

ONE held the distaff, one the strand
Of life enformed with eager hand;
The third the fateful scissors plied,
Which should the thread of life divide.

Lay down the distaff, cease to spin.
'Twas life my Chloe's love to win.
Your thread, your scissors I despise;
'Tis death when she averts her eyes.

DIDO TO AENEAS.

VIRGIL, *Aeneid*, IV.

NO goddess of love was thy mother, nor canst thou from Dardanus trace
What the terrible rocks of stern Caucasus sired, thy perfidious race;
They were fierce tiger's teats that for cruelty suckled thine infancy base.
What need now for feigning, what need keep despair for worse troubles? my sighs
Gained never a sigh from his breast, or a glance from his pitiless eyes.
Was he melted to tears, could he feel for a heart driven wild by its love?
What is worst who can say; for great Juno, no more, or Saturnian Jove
Looks on with fair eyes. Since he failed in whom trust or confide any more?
Yet how humble he was when the waves washed him up with his wrecks on my shore.
I received him a beggar, gave half (O the fool that I was!) of my crown,
Restored fleet and friends; now incensed the fierce furies have made me their own.

For first 'tis Apollo the future foretells, then the Lycian lots make their guess,
Then drops a swift messenger straight from above with Jove's orders—no less.
That I fancy a toil that those great ones affect, that disturbs them on high!
Yet deem not that I would detain, or your fast flowing falsehoods deny.
Seek Italy, then, with the winds you desire, seek your realms o'er the deep.
Yet I hope that some punishment still—for who says the good gods always sleep?—
Shall lure your false ship on the rocks; while awaiting in terror your doom
There'll be time to call often on me; though absent, my fires will consume;
And when death shall my suffering spirit have wrenched from its mansion of clay
Still constant my ghost shall attend. Yes, the penalty, wretch, you shall pay;
I shall hear; and the tale of your penance shall glad my dark home far away.

A GHOST.

COLD, pale, invisible, save once an age
When ghostly feelings move beyond what ghosts
Can bear who bear so much, then seen alone
By those who greatly loved or greatly wronged,
I hover round this place best known on earth,
The swallow-circle that I never leave,
Nor would I leave it did the fate that rules
My death in life allow a wider sphere.
Not without feelings yet; stilled passions tune
A noiseless throb to suit their shadowy home.
Joy, as on wintry hearths one spark survives
To mock the wearied watcher, doubly cold
With thinking of a fire that glows no more,
Stares at the far-off past with dubious eyes,
Doubt now its cheerless solace, once its bane.
Fondness I feel, worst thorn to this poor breast
Which cannot shield its loved ones any more.
Afar, a giant shadow indistinct,
Remorse stands like a figure in the mist,
A mist no ray for me shall ever pierce,
And magnifies to crime each tiny sin.
And yet I cling to life—still rightly called,
Since feeling is not death—as wretches use

To the last poor rags they own ; more worn and thin
Less to be thrown away. Poor sad remain !
Better these pulseless dregs of feeling teach,
And kindly teach to those who cannot cease,
Be anything, be anywhere than end.
And sorrow is the epitaph we write
O'er joys that once were ours, or might have been.
Tears that bedew the tomb of happiness
Are wiped when 'tis forgotten. Not so mine
Ceasing shall prove me thankless. Grief and cold,
Which none could feel who had ne'er been glad and warm,
Tell yet their joyless tale of warmth and joy.

JAEL.

HE came to her in sore distress,
And she—what woman could do less?—
Pitied his need, and served him well,
Till at her feet he bowed, he fell.

Not through the head but through the heart
My Jael sent the fatal dart,
And proved the awful story true
Whose repetition now I rue.

And, as good springs from evil deeds,
Faith from her falseness now proceeds.
Be sure 'twas not all fable then
Which now repeats itself again.

One but ensnared her country's foe,
The other lays a true heart low.
'Twas but the body Jael slew:
Keener the point can hearts undo.

LIKE UNTO A WHEEL.

"'Make them like unto a wheel' is a bitter sarcasm, as all the learned know, against the *grand tour* and the restless spirit for making it which David prophetically foresaw would haunt the children of men in the latter days."—*Sterne.*

DEAR traitor friend, so heedless now
Of bonds we swore of old to keep,
What curse shall venge the broken vow?
Yet coals of fire I would not heap,
Nor mine t' invoke the dread array
Of pains that David's foes might feel;
I will but speed you on your way,
And wish you "like unto a wheel."

A lazy man whose wish confessed
Is 'mongst fat household gods to bide,
Who'd scorn the Islands of the Blest
Though Cook himself your bark should guide,
With bilious gaze disgusted view
What weaker souls ecstatic scan,
Each milestone note as insult new—
All bare from Beersheba to Dan.

Scale, 'gainst the grain, each Pyramid,
Whirl o'er the Rocky Mountains fast,
Catch glimpses of some beauty hid
In shady grot, and, lo, 'tis passed.
Like correspondents sent to write
Of wars and rumours, never done
Your journey; speed your ceaseless flight,
But corresponding you with none.

Hurry from Alp to Apennine,
From silver Thames to Tiber brown,
For solitude in cities pine,
Or wish each desert were a town.
Go fidget with the stolid Turk,
Be with grimacing Frenchmen cool,
Foolish and trifler where men work,
And wise but where they play the fool.

And change *your* mind with change of scene;
With shirtless mobs blaspheming vie,
Or decent lisp "God save the Queen,"
But have no heart in either cry.
Be Whig or Radical to-day,
And to a Tory turn to-morrow;
But all parts discontented play,
Since no man cares what coat you borrow.

'Mid life's Damascus-gardens pluck
A rose that in the desert dies,
Grasp the warm skirts of fancied luck;
She leaves them in your hand and flies.

Be first low-churchman rough and rude,
  Ape, spite of law, Rome's follies next,
On every faith by turns intrude,
  See Hell or Heaven in any text.

By turns let heedless Lucy win
  The heart ere night she'll have forgot,
And Kate parade upon a pin
  The butterfly she values not.
Be all for money-bags to-day,
  To-morrow swear by love alone,
And either phantom haunt your way,
  But money-bags nor love be won.

Alas! old friend, for not on you
  The vials of my wrath should fall;
Our friendship pleased while it was new,
  'Twas scarce your fault that it must pall.
'Mid your old oaks, whose leaves appear
  Less changeful than their master's mind,
Take swallows false for comrades dear,
  Make bosom friends of every wind.

ELEGY ON A MINOR POET.

A YOUTH I knew of old who might have proved
Useful as any to the earth he loved;
That he had talent scarce a soul denied,
Or application—but 'twas misapplied.

His days were not all idleness, and yet
His energies on trifles all were set;
And rhymes ran in his head, when all the time
Plain reason had done more for him than rhyme.

So others passed him by and made their mark,
As the stiff barge outsails the tacking bark.
He made no mark—till now men ceased to say
"This man will surely make a name one day."

One night he lay awake, his heart grew cold,
"Another wasted day, and I grow old;
I will do—anything, this night once o'er,
But never waste a moment any more."

Poor fool! at daybreak God required his soul,
Just as 'twas starting for the intended goal.
And now it seems uncertain did he miss
Or by the sudden ending hap on bliss.

Whether to pity who so long was weak,
Or envy for the vow he did not break,
With other secrets we may know some day:
At present 'twere presumptuous to say.

ON PLUCK.

PLUCK, which the salt of th' earth inherit,
In poor and sick is simple merit.
If you're disqualified by nature
In limb or purse, in heart or feature,
So bear yourself that there may be
Some gain from the deformity.
A callous place in heart or hump
Has deadened many a woeful bump.
The dame yokes palsy with her wits;
'Twill move her fingers as she knits.
No one-legged man in age need beg,
But dibble with his wooden leg.
A bright success one might foretell
Should these two wed and manage well.
They'd always find to hand, or make
Something to dibble or to shake.
And while he cut his useful capers
She'd twitch the seeds from out the papers.

TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US!

THE cottage, dwarfed beside the steeple,
May yet suffice for little people.
Though the thatched roof admits each shower,
Yet in the window blooms a flower
As cherished in its humble home
As rare exotic 'neath its dome.
All pride, e'en worm's, is worthy of heed;
Your own may be of meaner breed.
You wish to make men vile and low?
First let them see you think them so.
Put some poor wretch beyond the pale,
He's nearer to the county gaol,
But none the happier, though you've taught him
To see himself what great folks thought him.

But when conceit soars high in air
Silence assents to inflate it there;
So of each great man think aloud,
Your voice may chance to pierce his cloud.
Call rulers butchers now and then,
It may remind they slaughter men.
When thousands bleed to aggrandise one
Let th' epitaphs cry from each stone.

Tell patriot statesmen to their faces
That minds will change by changing places.
Tell judges they have passions yet,
Th' unworthy fact they'd else forget.
Something this freedom may effect,
Something that tenderness correct,
In fate's rough balance, where we spy
Sad gaps between her low and high.

LAUDARI A LAUDATO.

I SET myself long since with pen
And voice to exalt my fellow men.
And as I praised, "some praise one day,
Surely," I thought, "will come my way."
Incompetent was genius' son,
Dullard I polished till he shone.
Then when my bread had all been cast
Upon the waters, paused at last,
And strained my careful eyes—alack!
No crumb of all my praise came back.

Now, all too late, alas! I'm fain
Take up sincerity again;
Call dullards what I know them, say
There's nothing witty in a bray.
Sed revocare. 'Tis too late
To eat the words that they have eat.
It was enough to raise my gall
To see them when they'd swallowed all
—So dogs take butter—go their ways,
Wag not a thank, yet keep my praise.

"ALL ON ONE SIDE LIKE A BRIDGNORTH ELECTION."

Proverbs.

I was born at old Bridgnorth a long while ago,
  Well birched by "the Doctor," and when I'd acquired
Some smattering, voted my birthplace too slow,
  And a far wider field for my talents desired.
Smiled my mother—and wiped the last tear from her eye—
  "You'll be spared in the future these marks of affection,
Since the humble and poor your great world passes by,
  And is all on one side like a Bridgnorth Election."

The old lady was right; at rich Midas's touch
  All things turned to gold, as mythology tells,
And much shall be given to him who has much,
  Or to those who less want it than anyone else.
If you're poor and in love the girl thinks you a noodle
  To dream she could foster a pauper's affection,
And her ma, ill-bred pa, and correctly-bred poodle
  Are all on one side, like a Bridgnorth Election.

At law, poor and friendless, your cause can't be right;
You may move till death stops all your motions one day;
But pleas without fees are dumb dogs that won't bite,
And not found of much use with the devil to pay.
Your pluck 's but sheer cheek, and your statements all fudge,
And these last, like yourself, much in need of correction,
And respectable jury, and truculent judge
Are all on one side, like a Bridgnorth Election.

In the Church wrestle daily 'gainst error and cant,
And at night trudge through dirt at each pauper's behest;
Half-starved, any gross and material want
Of the fishes and loaves should be sternly repressed:
Since so seldom does zeal "unconnected" obtain
Of patronage crumbs e'en the slightest refection
That to grovel 'neath Dives' high Table were vain
As to canvass undowered at a Bridgnorth Election.

Be a hero—full private—you'll have your reward too;
Cold shoulder instead of the limb that you dropped;
But with interest and rank partial fate will award you
Ribbons and pensions without being lopped.
In politics what matters Tory or Rad?
That you're Whitmore or Foster won't cause your rejection;
But if all your estate 's 'neath your hat, you're a cad:
No votes for you at a Bridgnorth Election.

You may go to the meet, you may start in the run,
And never a fence in the world but you'd face,
But a poor crippled steed leaves you out of the fun,
Your heart the sole thing that is in the right place.
You may ride, whip, and spur amid jeers and hard knocks,
While "Cashbox," "Goldfinder," and steeds of that section
Cross the fence with the hounds and the crafty old fox,
And are all on one side like a Bridgnorth Election.

Then put modesty by, if you'd rise, for a swagger,
Shout, advertise, brag without reason or with;
Be "Melchisedek" Jones, "Baron" Johnson, or tag a
Few letters, an alphabet on to your Smith.
Or live poor and honest, if that will content,
Till your ill-covered bones shall be ripe for dissection;
Or lie in the Churchyard with men of your bent,
All on one side like a Bridgnorth Election.

MY PHILOSOPHY.

SINCE the good things never came to me on which
I'd set my heart,
Or but mocked me for a moment ere they hastened
to depart,
I've invented a philosophy that never knows regret:
What I hadn't to depreciate, what left me to forget.

For example; could you tell me in what corner of
the earth
Lies the village—did I love it?—which I honoured by
my birth?
I should say the games were silly ones my childhood
used to play,
And perhaps the spotted butterflies were not so very
gay.

Since Amelia wouldn't take me when I asked her, is
it right
She should set herself to haunt me when I lie awake
at night?
Let her find another lover, if she can, to keep her
vain;
But it 's rather too indelicate to bother me again.

The hopes that used to teaze me why once I thought
them good
I'm sure I can't imagine, and I wouldn't if I could.
Was it fate's or was it my fault that I failed so at
each task?
It isn't worth enquiry, and I never mean to ask.

Yet if sighs and sobs could help me don't you think
I'd change my note?
My past should not be stranded if tears could make
it float.
But I won't be so ridiculous, since chances, once they
fly,
No more our eyes shall light on although we weep
them dry.

So I advertise my certainty to keep you from regret,
And guide to where your happiness is waiting for you
yet.
And when you bless and thank me you'll be happier
than I
Who could never, never keep the rules of my philo-
sophy.

THE RHYMER.

WHEN I wrote rhyme, sweet day of grace,
My world was quite another place
From this I dwell on now, and men
Were good, and women noble then.
Falsehood and meanness were unborn,
Or blighted not the April morn
Of youth's bright day, the golden time
When I wrote rhyme.

As summer yields to winter's cold
The glamour passed and I grew old.
Wisdom, oh! shame, chid fancy's play,
The golden mists bade melt away.
False beat the heart clasped to my own,
False the fond eyes where truth once shone,
A canker ravaged every rose,
And I wrote prose.

Dear, patient Guardian Angel, ere
To some fond, hopeful heart you fare,
Grant me to feel once more the glow
That fired my spirit long ago;

Bid the lost visions flit before
My eyes then close for evermore.
Recalling thus the golden time
When I wrote rhyme.

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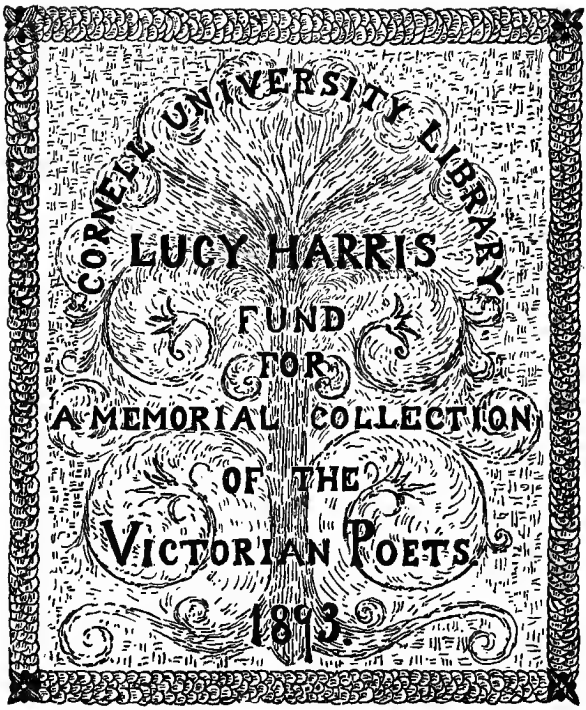

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